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OLC 71-0746

28 July 1971

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Letter to the President from Chairman John Stennis
Regarding Legislation Affecting Agency Programs
in Southeast Asia

1. This afternoon I asked Mr. Edward Braswell, Chief Counsel and Staff Director, Senate Armed Services Committee, about the status of a letter Chairman Stennis said he might write to the President on the above subject. Mr. Braswell said he had drafted such a letter in accordance with Senator Stennis' instructions, but it had not been signed. Mr. Braswell said the letter made the following points:

a. Senator Stennis is concerned over the possible impact of certain recently introduced legislation on major Administration programs in Southeast Asia.

b. He is raising this matter with the President, rather than individual department heads, since the programs in question cut across departmental lines and involve several agencies.

c. He believes this legislation, which is designed to restrict the Administration's freedom of action in conducting or supporting certain programs in Southeast Asia, will do serious short-term damage to the effectiveness of these important programs, and over the longer term will limit the effectiveness of CIA in supporting programs of this kind.

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d. Senator Stennis believes that most of these programs can probably be continued through the remainder of the Fiscal Year but thereafter it is essential that ways be found to fund them by different means, more acceptable to the Congress.

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JOHN M. MAURY
Legislative Counsel

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D R A F T

Dear Professor LaBelle:

On receipt of your letters of 2 and 7 July 1971, I referred your inquiry to the CIA.

As you may know, it has long been CIA policy never to respond to queries concerning its activities, regardless of whether the response would appropriately be in the affirmative or in the negative.

I would suggest -- if indeed you have not already done so -- that you write direct to the persons or organizations you mention, and query them as to their origins or sources of funds, if you still retain any reservations about them.

Please feel free to write me again if there is anything I or my staff can do to assist you.

Yours sincerely,

PLC

OLC 71-0692

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SUGGESTED REPLY

Dear Mrs. Mason:

This is in reply to your letter dated June 30, 1971 concerning the Central Intelligence Agency.

The manner of funding Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty is now being considered by the Congress. I will consider all factors carefully when this matter is voted upon by the Senate.

As you noted, the CIA has initiated a mutual fund investment program for its employees. This is completely voluntary and was approved by the Internal Revenue Service. Such a program had been previously introduced in another Government agency and other Government agencies are planning to institute similar programs.

In view of your concern as to allegations concerning the Agency, I wish to point out that the CIA is directly accountable to the President and the National Security Council and acts under close Executive control. Four committees of the House and Senate, Appropriations and Armed Services, exercise legislative oversight. The President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board, comprised of outside consultants, conducts periodic reviews. In judging the substance of

an allegation, one should recognize the careful review in formulating major decisions which is exercised.

I appreciate your writing and I am enclosing a pamphlet on the origins of CIA and a copy of a recent speech by Mr. Richard Helms. I trust that this material may give you a better understanding of the Agency and its mission.